



U.S. Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management
Upper Snake River District
Idaho Falls, Idaho

Bureau of Reclamation
Snake River Area Office
Boise, Idaho

Boise to Borah Transmission-line Rights-of-Way Transfer

Environmental Assessment



August 2003

**IDaho Power Company
BOISE TO BORAH RIGHTS-OF-WAY TRANSFER**

Project No.: IDI-34349

Proposed action: Idaho Power Company proposes to transfer the authorization for rights-of-way on five existing transmission lines from Federal Energy Regulatory Commission hydroelectric licenses to a Bureau of Land Management Federal Land Policy and Management Act grant.

Type of statement: Environmental Assessment

Lead agency: Bureau of Land Management, Upper Snake River District

Cooperating agency: Bureau of Reclamation, Snake River Area Office

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SUMMARY

The Idaho Power Company (Idaho Power) proposes to transfer the rights-of-way (ROW) authorization on federal lands for five existing transmission lines from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), under authority of the Federal Power Act, to the appropriate federal agency that has jurisdiction of these lands, either the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), as appropriate. The transmission lines extend from Boise to American Falls along the Snake River Plain, a distance of approximately 180 miles. This action was promulgated by a decision by the FERC that it no longer has jurisdiction over these non-primary transmission lines.

In 2002, Idaho Power applied for a joint ROW grant with the BLM and BOR. As the lead federal agency, the BLM determined an Environmental Assessment (EA) would be required to identify potential resource impacts, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The BOR is a cooperating agency.

As required by NEPA, the BLM conducted scoping activities to identify potentially significant issues to be analyzed in the EA. The following list summarizes the issues and concerns raised during the scoping process:

- Impacts to botanical resources
- Impacts to wildlife resources
- Impacts to historic and archaeological resources
- Concerns related to Native American Indian interest and rights

The analysis completed during the preparation of the EA found a low level of impact to specific botanical, wildlife, and historic and archaeological resources. Protection measures would be effective in eliminating or reducing most of these impacts. For example, spatial and temporal constraints to ground disturbing operation and maintenance activities in the vicinity of sensitive resources would be implemented to reduce or eliminate potential impacts. No impacts to land use would occur as a result of the proposed project.

The EA will be available for a 30-day public review and comment period. If no significant impacts are identified and the proposed action is approved, the BLM and BOR will issue a joint Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for lands crossed by the project. If the agencies determine that the EA does not sufficiently address alternatives and potential impacts, an Environmental Impact Statement may be required for the project to proceed.

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